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The United Arab Emirates and the United States Sign Bilateral Agreement for Peaceful Nuclear Energy Cooperation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 15, 2009, Washington, DC – His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates, and United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice today signed a bilateral agreement for peaceful nuclear cooperation that enhances international standards of nuclear non-proliferation, safety and security.

Known as a "123 Agreement," after Section 123 of the US Atomic Energy Act, the new pact establishes a required legal framework for commerce in civilian nuclear energy between the two countries.

"This agreement will benefit both of our countries, and is another example of the strong relationship between the United States and the United Arab Emirates," said Sheikh Abdullah. "Under the terms of this agreement, the UAE will gain access to significant capabilities and experience in the peaceful use of nuclear energy. This will allow the UAE to develop its civilian nuclear program to the highest standards of safety, security and non-proliferation. The agreement will also open opportunities for US firms to be active participants in the UAE nuclear energy program."

The 123 Agreement follows the April 2008 signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy between the two countries.

The UAE released a detailed policy document on the evaluation and potential development of peaceful nuclear energy in April of last year. The UAE policy is based on the principles of complete operational transparency and the highest standards of safety, security and non-proliferation. The policy was developed following a study that projected massive increases in demand for electricity in the coming decades. The study determined that nuclear energy is a viable and compelling option for meeting the UAE's future electricity demand.

These policy commitments include a pledge to forego any domestic fuel enrichment or reprocessing capability, in favor of long-term external fuel supply arrangements. Additionally, the UAE policy calls for close and continuous coordination with the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as cooperation with the governments and firms of responsible nuclear supplier nations, including the United States.

The agreement signed today reflects the UAE's policy commitments and meets or exceeds all of the guarantees and controls requirements of Section 123 of the US Atomic Energy Act. Various international experts have called the UAE's program the "gold standard" approach to civil nuclear power development. Once signed, the executive branch forwards the agreement to the US Congress for review.

Additional Background

<http://mail.harbourgrp.com/exchange/uaefara/Inbox/UAE%20and%20US%20sign%20bilateral%20ag...> 1/26/2009

On Friday, February 27, 2009, this e-mail was sent from Carmen MacDougall, The Harbour Group, to a list of about 100 reporters, NGOs, academics and other experts or interested parties in the foreign policy, nonproliferation and nuclear energy communities.

While we are waiting for the Obama administration to forward the US-UAE 123 Agreement to Congress, I wanted to share some updates on the UAE's peaceful, civilian nuclear energy program. Recent milestones:

- The UAE and Japan signed a memorandum of cooperation concerning the potential development of peaceful nuclear power, in February. This memo roughly corresponds with the US-UAE MOU signed in April last year. [Link](#)
- The UAE has moved forward on nonproliferation commitments. In February, the UAE Cabinet authorized the UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs to conclude the comprehensive safeguards agreement and Additional Protocol with the IAEA. The UAE has communicated with the IAEA Director General about its intention to enter into these agreements and is waiting to hear back from the Board of Governors. [Link](#)
- The Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation initiated its formal procurement process with a contractor meeting in February. The goal is to select a company (or team) by third-quarter of 2009.

We've also been pleased to get additional [support](#) on both the UAE approach and specifically the 123 Agreement. At an on-the-record briefing at CFR, **NRC Chairman Dale Klein** [said](#) the approach was "robust" and the "123 could be a model for other countries." **UK Foreign Secretary David Miliband** said in a [speech](#) on "Lifting the Nuclear Shadow," "I think that the way in which countries like the UAE have pursued their own civilian nuclear power programme with the utmost transparency, the utmost determination to meet the higher standards of safety and security and the utmost determination to work with international bodies is a very, very important signal of the way things should proceed in the future." **Mark Fitzpatrick**, IISS, wrote a [piece](#) in Arms Control Today outlining steps to "build a bulwark against a Middle East nuclear tipping phenomenon"—one of which is passing the US-UAE 123 Agreement. He writes that the agreement "usefully locks in this commitment [to forgo sensitive indigenous fuel-cycle technologies] in the form of a provision specifying the right of return of technology and material if the commitment is abrogated. It would be inadvisable to hold up the proposed 123 agreement with the UAE on other grounds, such as the past history of Dubai as a hub for the Khan nuclear black market network." This [fact sheet](#) outlines the UAE's actions on export control.

More information is available at www.usuae123.org

Let me know if you have any questions. Best, Carmen

This e-mail is distributed by the US-Emirates Alliance/The Harbour Group, on behalf of the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates and the Executive Affairs Authority of the Government of Abu Dhabi. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.

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